

Message Text

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13-12

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 280326Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7357

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

UNCLAS CANBERRA 0645

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AS, PINT

SUBJECT: WHITLAM ELECTED LEADER OF OPPOSITION

1. AS EXPECTED, THE ALP ELECTED FORMER PRIME MINISTER HOUGH WHITLAM OPPOSITION LEADER ON JAN 27. MR. WHITLAM OVERWHELMED TWO OPPONENTS, MR. CREAN, HIS FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, AND MR. BOWEN, FORMER MINISTER FOR OVERSEAS TRADE, BY 36 VOTES TO 27. HOWEVER, THE OTHER THREE TOP LEADERSHIP POSTS WENT TO MEN WHO ARE NOT WHITLAM SUPPORTERS: MR. UREN, ELECTED DEPUTY LEADER; SENATOR WRIEDT, ALP LEADER IN THE SENATE; AND SENATOR KEEFFE AS WRIEDT'S DEPUTY. IN ANOTHER APPARENT REBUKE TO WHITLAM, THE CAUCUS APPOINTED REX CONNOR, THE CONTROVERSIAL FORMER MINISTER FOR MINERALS AND ENERGY, TO THE 20-MAN SHADOW MINISTRY. (CONNOR WAS FORCED TO RESIGN AS MINISTER IN OCTOBER AFTER WHITLAM ACCUSED HIM OF MAKING UNTRUE STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE OVERSEA LOAN AFFAIR.)

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PAGE 02 CANBER 00645 280533Z

2. THE LABOR PARTY ALSO BROKE PRECEDENT BY ELECTING ITS

LEADERSHIP FOR ONLY 18 MONTHS RATHER THAN THE TRADITIONAL THREE YEARS. THIS 18-MONTH LIMITATION WAS CLEARLY DESIGNED TO LEAVE THE WAY OPEN FOR BOB HAWKE, ACTU AND ALP PRESIDENT, OR MR. DUNSTON, PREMIER OF SOUTHE AUSTRALIA, TO MAKE RUNS FOR LABOR PARTY LEADERSHIP PRIOR TO THE NEXT PARTY ELECTIONS WHICH WILL NOW BE HELD IN JULY 1977.

3. A FULL LIST OF THE SHADOW CABINET FOLLOWS BY AIRGRAM.
PERCIVAL

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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